

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 5 KABUL 0503

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, AF
SUBJECT: YEAR-END AFGHAN INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

1. SUMMARY. DAOUD'S CONTROL OVER AFGHANISTAN IS GREATER THAN ANYONE'S HAS EVER BEEN. THIS CONTROL IS BASED IN PART ON RAW POLICE POWER, BUT THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO IT. THE BASIC LEGITIMACY OF DAOUD'S REGIME, HIS OWN RIGHT TO RULE, HAS NEVER BEEN POPULARLY QUESTIONED DESPITE ITS ORIGINS IN A COUP D'ETAT. FURTHER, AFGHANS REMAIN GENERALLY CONFIDENT IN THE HEAD OF STATE HIMSELF, AND ARE WILLING TO LET HIM WORK LONGER TO FULFILL THE GOALS PROCLAIMED BY HIS REGIME.

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THE AFGHAN "LEFT" IS DISPERSED AND COWED, ITS PROGRAM OF REFORM PREEMPTED BY DAOUD HIMSELF. POTENTIAL OUTSIDE SUPPORTERS OF THE LEFT LIKE THE SOVIET UNION PREFER GOOD RELATIONS WITH DAOUD'S GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORTING LOCAL ADMIRERS.

THE AFGHAN "RIGHT," A KIND OF NATURAL MAJORITY BASED UPON ISLAM AND THE STATUS QUO WHICH ANY REGIME HERE MUST STRIVE TO PLEASE OR PLACATE, MAY HOWEVER HAVE HARBORED DISSIDENCE DURING 1976. THE ONE "MAJOR" ANTI-REGIME AGITATION OF THE YEAR ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WAS CLEARLY A RIGHTIST UNDERTAKING, BUT IT WAS QUICKLY EXPOSED AND POSED NO SERIOUS THREAT TO DAOUD AND HIS GOVERNMENT.

WITHIN THIS SYSTEM OF STRICT CONTROL A NUMBER OF MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO RATIONALIZE AND BUTTRESS THE DAOUD REPUBLIC. A PROMISED CONSTITUTION WAS ANNOUNCED TO HAVE BEEN DRAFTED AND SENT TO A REVIEW COMMITTEE. IN DECEMBER OF 1976 CONVOCATION OF A "LOYA JIRGAH" (AN EXCEPTIONAL ASSEMBLY OF REPRESENTATIVES AND NOTABLES FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY) TO AFFIRM A CONSTITUTION AND THE ACTIONS OF THE REPUBLIC WAS PROCLAIMED. WITH THE NEW AFGHAN YEAR (IT BEGAN MARCH 21, 1976) A SEVEN YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN WAS INITIATED. AIDED BY GOOD WEATHER FOR AGRICULTURE, AND PLENTIFUL FOREIGN AID, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION SHOWS SIGNS OF GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT. IMPORTANT LAND TENURE DECREES HAVE BECOME LEGALLY EFFECTIVE, AND LANDMARK CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LEGAL CODES PROCLAIMED.

CHINKS IN DAOUD'S ARMOR OF CONTROL AND FORCED-DRAFT PROGRESS DO HOWEVER EXIST. DAOUD'S
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LINE OF COMPETENT AND EFFECTIVE MINISTERS AND POLITICAL LIEUTENANTS IS A THIN ONE AGAINST THE CHALLENGES OF AFGHAN POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND SOCIETY. AFGHANISTAN ALSO SUFFERS FROM ILLS THAT BESET AN AUTOCRACY: A STIFLING OF INITIATIVE, TAILORING OF ADVICE TO THE AUTOCRAT TO CONFORM TO HIS IDEAS (REAL OR PERCEIVED), AND A SLAVISH IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE REAL OR PERCEIVED IDEAS EVEN WHERE OBVIOUSLY INAPPROPRIATE.

IN TERMS OF AMERICAN INTEREST, AFGHAN INTERNAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS ARE FAVORABLE SIGNS, BUT DOUBTS ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER DAOUD LEAVES THE SCENE TEND TO JANGLE OTHERWISE CALM NERVES. END SUMMARY.

2. DAOUD'S POSITION: DURING 1976 PRESIDENT DAOUD CONTINUED TO DEMONSTRATE CONTROL OVER ANY MODEST REMAINS OF INDEPENDENT POLITICAL STRENGTH AND OVER

ANY POTENTIAL FOR DISSIDENCE. HE IS IN AS TOTAL
TOTAL CONTROL OF AFGHANISTAN AS ANYONE HAS EVER BEEN.
IF THERE IS OPPOSITION TO HIM IT IS BURIED DEEP,
DISPERSED, VOICELESS, FRIGHTENED BY THE BELIEF --
PROBABLY WELL FOUNDED -- THAT DAOUD'S NETWORK
FOR GATHERING INFORMATION MAKES HIM CLOSE TO
OMNISCIENT AND THAT HIS TREATMENT OF THOSE WHO
OPPOSE HIM IS HARSH AND SUDDEN.

3. THE "LEFT": THE AFGHAN "LEFT," INSO FAR AS
IT MAY STILL EXIST AS PEOPLE OPERATING TOGETHER --
AS OPPOSED TO SCATTERED AND FEARFUL INDIVIDUALS --
MOVED ITSELF ONLY ONCE DURING 1976: A NUMBER OF
"SHABNAMAS" (LITERALLY "NIGHT LETTERS," A TERM
USED HERE TO DESCRIBE PAMPHLETS FURTIVELY WRITTEN
AND DISTRIBUTED) APPEARED FOLLOWING THE MAY 7
AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PAKISTANI
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PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO WOULD SHORTLY VISIT KABUL.

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

HISTORICALLY THE AFGHAN LEFT HAS FAVORED A STRIDENT POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN ON THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE, AND BHUTTO'S COMING SIGNALLED POSSIBLE RAPPROCHEMENT. EVEN THIS ACT OF LEFTIST OPPOSITION HOWEVER WAS CAREFUL NOT TO SCOLD DAOUD PERSONALLY. "SHABNAMA" CRITICISM WAS OF BHUTTO, PRESENTED AS WARNING TO HIM THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE HIS POLICIES TOWARD THE PUSHTUN AND BALUCH POPULATIONS OF PAKISTAN IN ORDER TO FIND ACCEPTANCE WITH THE AFGHAN MASSES.

EVEN HAD THE REGIME'S CONTROL OVER DISSIDENT VOICES BEEN LESS, OR THE DISSIDENT VOICES MORE COURAGEOUS, THE AFGHAN LEFT WOULD HAVE FOUND IT HARD TO FIND ISSUES WITH WHICH TO CONFRONT THE

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REPUBLICAN REGIME. DAOUD HAS PREEMPTED REFORM ISSUES IN HIS FREQUENT CALLS FOR AUSTERITY, INTEGRITY AND PATRIOTISM, AND THROUGH VISIBLE REFORM MEASURES UNEXCEPTIONABLE TO LEFTIST PLATFORMS. A DAOUDIST-NATIONALIST CREED HAS GROWN AND BECOME OFFICIAL, AND IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR IDEOLOGUES OF OTHER PERSUASIONS TO MATCH THIS PATRIOTIC CALL.

THERE IS BESIDES, STILL, A BASIC CONFIDENCE AMONG AFGHANS IN DAOUD HIMSELF AND A GENERAL WILL-INGNESS TO BE PATIENT AS HE WORKS OUT "REPUBLICAN" POLICIES. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FOUND A LEFTIST OPPOSITION ON A "WE CAN DO BETTER" THEME, EVEN THOUGH DAOUD'S REGIME HAS MANIFEST SHORTCOMINGS: INEFFICIENCY, HARSHNESS, INABILITY TO HALT CORRUPTION, AND GENERAL INABILITY TO SATISFY EXPECTATIONS RAISED BY REPUBLICAN RHETORIC.

NOR IS THE AFGHAN LEFT SUCCORED FROM ABROAD: THE SOVIET UNION CLEARLY PREFERS GOOD RELATIONS WITH DAOUD'S REGIME TO ADVENTURING WITH LOCAL ADMIRERS. THE CHINESE, WHOSE SATISFACTION WITH DAOUD IS DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL TO HIS DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION, FEEL THE LEFT TO BE DOMINATED BY PRO-SOVIET GROUPS, LEAVING THEM NO RELIABLE LOCAL MATERIAL WITH WHICH THEY MIGHT WORK. THE LIBYAN AND IRAQI EMBASSIES SUPPORT CLIENT PALESTINIANS AT KABUL

UNIVERSITY, BUT THE ONE ARAB SOLIDARITY MOBILIZATION EFFORT DURING 1976 TURNED OUT PATHETIC IN QUALITY AND AN AFFRONT TO AN AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WHICH PATROLS ITS UNIVERSITY CAMPUS TO INSURE THAT MORE THAN FIVE OF ITS OWN STUDENT NATIONALS NEVER CONGREGATE.

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4. THE "RIGHT": THE "RIGHT" IN AFGHANISTAN FORMS A KIND OF NATURAL MAJORITY, AND IF ANY DISSIDENT CONGREGATION HAD PROSPECTS FOR EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ACTION DURING 1976 IT WAS ONE OF THIS COMPOSITION AND OUTLOOK. THE TERM "RIGHT" IN FACT DESCRIBES THE AFGHAN MAINSTREAM. ITS PLACE IN SOCIETY IS ON THE LAND AND IN TRADE, AND ITS OUTLOOK IS SHARED AMONG THOSE WHO ARE STAUNCHLY TRADITIONALIST IN POLITICS AND RELIGION, THOSE WHO STAND TO LOSE ECONOMICALLY OR FEAR TO LOSE UNDER THE DAOUD REPUBLIC, AND THOSE WHO MISTRUST AFGHAN GOVERNMENTS GENERALLY. ITS VIEWPOINTS ARE SHARED BY MANY IN GOVERNMENT, AND SINCE THE AFGHAN RIGHT APPROPRIATES ISLAM FOR ITS PARTICULAR USE IT IS A FORCE TO BE RECONED WITH EVEN BY THOSE WHO SEE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE SECULAR GOOD AND THE TENETS OF RELIGION. IN AFGHANISTAN GOVERNMENTS MUST PROVIDE ORTHODOXY AS WELL AS PERFORM IN MORE USUAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ROLES, MEANING THAT THERE IS ALWAYS ONE MEANS MORE OF OPPOSING A REGIME THAN WOULD BE THE CASE IN A NATION MORE SECULAR IN OUTLOOK.

THE DAOUD REGIME'S WAY OF LIVING WITH THIS TRICKY SITUATION, WHICH IT CAN DO NOTHING TO CHANGE, IS TO DISTINGUISH "REACTIONARIES" FROM AMONG MEMBERS OF THE RIGHTIST MAINSTREAM. A "REACTIONARY" IS SOMEONE WHO HAS ACHIEVED THE UNFAVORABLE NOTICE OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES THROUGH SOME DISSIDENCE LATENT OR EXPRESSED, YET WHOSE RELIGIOUS/POLITICAL ORIENTATION WOULD RENDER THE PERSON OTHERWISE NOT AN OBJECT OF CRITICISM.

THE LITTLE SPASMS OF DISSIDENCE WHICH DID OCCUR DURING 1976 PROBABLY WERE ALL THE WORK OF "RIGHTIST" INSTIGATORS. THESE ACTS WERE MEAGER AND SCATTERED,
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AND CLEARLY POSED NO THREAT TO DAOUD'S CONTROL. THE ONE ANTI-GOVERNMENT PLOT PUBLICIZED BY THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, ATTRIBUTED TO RETIRED GENERAL SAYID MIR AHMAD SHAH AND "A NUMBER OF CORRUPT AND REACTIONARY ELEMENTS," WAS A PLAN FOR VENGEANCE AGAINST PERSONS THE GENERAL FELT HAD WRONGED HIM PERSONALLY RATHER THAN AN EFFORT TO UNSEAT DAOUD AND HIS MINIONS. PENETRATED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMANTS FROM THE BEGINNING THE PLOT AND ITS AFTERMATH IN FACT TURNED OUT USEFUL TO DAOUD: A NUMBER OF "REACTIONARY" FIGURES WERE ROUNDED UP, AND THIS EVENT CONTINUES TO REVERBERATE AMONG THOSE WHO MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO OPPOSE DAOUD ON RIGHTIST GROUNDS.

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

5. OTHER MIGHT-BE OPPOSITION: 1976 SAW DAOUD FURTHERING HIS ALMOST TOTAL HOLD OVER AFGHANISTAN'S MILITARY APARATUS. IN JANUARY HE NAMED A STAUNCH DAOUD LOYALIST, GENERAL GHULAM HAIDER RASULI TO BE CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF. GENERAL RASULI REPLACED

THE DISCONCERTINGLY CANDID AND INDEPENDENT GENERAL ABDUL KARIM MOSTAGHNI, WHO WAS SUNTED AWAY AS AMBASSADOR TO POLAND. (INTERESTINGLY, GENERAL MOSTAGHNI'S NAME SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED UP A MIGHT-BE CANDIDATE FOR HIGH OFFICE ON A LIST ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM THE SAYID MIR AHMAD SHAH BAND OF PLOTTERS. SEVERAL OTHER IMPORTANT NAMES WERE ON THE LIST. THOUGH IT WAS CONCEDED BY THE GOVERNMENT THAT THESE NAMES PROBABLY APPEARED WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PERSONS LISTED,

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IT IS INEVITABLY TRUE THAT A WHIFF OF SUSPICION WILL FOLLOW THESE MEN ALLEGEDLY CHOSEN TO BE AFGHANISTAN'S NEW LEADERS BY DARK CONSPIRATORS.)

OVER THE BUREAUCRACY AND OTHER MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT THERE HAS BEEN NO RECENT DOUBT THAT DAOUD IS IN COMPLETE POLITICAL CONTROL, EVEN THOUGH THE NATURE OF AFGHAN ADMINISTRATION PRECLUDES HIS FULL KNOWLEDGE OF HOW THESE PERSONS PERFORM PROFESSIONALLY IN THE JOBS ASSIGNED THEM. THERE ARE NO MINISTERS OR HIGH RANKING GOVERNMENT CIVILIAN OFFICERS IN AFGHANISTAN WHO CAN BE IMAGINED HAVING THEIR OWN POLITICAL BASE OR FOLLOWING. A MAN LIKE NUR AHMAD ETEMADI, WHO IS A RANKING "MOHAMMADZAI" CLANSMAN AND SOMEONE WHO MIGHT HAVE A FOLLOWING FROM EARLIER POLITICAL INCARNATIONS, CAN BECOME AMBASSADOR TO PAKISTAN BUT COULD PROBABLY NOT BECOME A DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER.

THE SHADOWY CENTRAL COMMITTEE WITH WHOM DAOUD CAME TO POWER IN 1973 HAS SUNK FURTHER INTO OBSCURITY, THOUGH IT IS OCCASIONALLY SUMMONED INTO BEING FOR SUCH CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS AS ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES OF STATE VISITORS. AS NEARLY AS WE CAN DETERMINE THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAS NO OTHER REASON FOR BEING.

ONE SEARCHES IN VAIN OUTSIDE THE APPARATUS OF GOVERNMENT TO LOCATE ANY PERSON -- EXCEPT FOR A CRAZED AND LONELY ASSASSIN -- OR INSTITUTION WHICH COULD POSE A THREAT TO DAOUD'S REGIME, OR FOR THAT MATTER EVEN A SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO DAOUD'S CONDUCT OF AFFAIRS.

6. PROGRESS IN ADMINISTRATION: UNDER THIS SYSTEM OF RIGID CONTROL GREAT STRIDES HAVE BEEN MADE TOWARD RATIONALIZING THE BASIS OF THE REGIME AND ITS CONDUCT OF AFFAIRS. IN THIS DAOUD BUILDS

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UPON THE FACT THAT THE BASIC LEGITIMACY OF HIS REGIME HAS NEVER BEEN WIDELY QUESTIONED BY THE AFGHAN PUBLIC. THOUGH DAOUD REPLACED HIS COUSIN THE KING IN JULY OF 1973 BY COUP D'ETAT, HIS "RIGHT TO GOVERN" HAS NEVER BEEN IN QUESTION.

DAOUD PROMISED A CONSTITUTION IN HIS "JESHYN" (NATIONAL CELEBRATION) SPEECH OF MID-JULY 1975 AND ON THE FOLLOWING MARCH 19, JUST BEFORE THE AFGHAN NEW YEAR, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT A DRAFT OF THE DOCUMENT HAD BEEN FORWARDED FOR STUDY BY A TWENTY-MEMBER COMMISSION. ON DECEMBER 27, 1976 CONVOCATION OF A "LOYA JIRGAH" (A GRAND ASSEMBLY OF NOTABLES FROM OVER THE NATION, CONVENED FROM LUME TO TIME IN AFGHANISTAN TO DISCUSS GREAT EVENTS) TO APPROVE THE CONSTITUTION AND POLICIES OF THE REGIME WAS ANNOUNCED. THE JIRGAH WILL TAKE PLACE DURING JANUARY, FEBRUARY OF 1977.

WITH THE AFGHAN NEW YEAR, WHICH BEGAN MARCH 21, 1976, CAME A SEVEN YEAR PLAN, HAMMERED OUT BY MINISTRIES AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH ATTEMPTS TO SET A COURSE FOR THE AFGHAN STATE FOR YEARS TO COME. THREE ENACTMENTS GOVERNING LAND TENURE AND TAXATION, ALSO IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFORMS PROMISED EARLIER BY DAOUD WERE DECREED OR BECAME EFFECTIVE DURING 1976 WHICH -- IF APPLIED FAIRLY AND IF CERTAIN DRACONIAN FETURES ARE MODERATED -- COULD GAIN POPULARITY FOR THE REPUBLICAN REGIME IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND IMPROVE THE LIVES OF RURAL PEOPLE. LANDMARK CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LEGAL CODES WERE DECREED TOWARDS THE END OF 1976, CLEARLY WORKS THAT CAME OUT OF PRODIGIOUS EFFORT AND A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT.

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7. ECONOMIC SITUATION: DAOUD CONTROLS A COUNTRY CORRECTLY RANKED AS ONE OF THE POOREST AND LEAST DEVELOPED IN THE WORLD. THE COMMON AFGHAN MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD -- IN TERMS OF ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL SERVICES, AND IN HIS OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER HIS LOT -- IS AT PRESENT DEPRIVED AND LOCKED INTO A SUBSISTENCE EXISTENCE.

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CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

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THESE FACTORS NOTWITHSTANDING, AFGHANISTAN
LACKS AN ATMOSPHERE OF ECONOMIC CRISIS AND
URGENCY THAT COULD, IF INADEQUATELY MET, UNDER-
MINE PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF DAOUD'S REGIME. THE
ECONOMIC SITUATION DURING THREE AND ONE-HALF
YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC HAS BEEN FAVORABLE FOR
DOUD. AFGHANISTAN HAS FED ITSELF FOR THE
MOST PART, UNHINDERED BY DROUGHTS OR OTHER
NATURAL DISASTERS; THE PRICES FOR AFGHAN
EXPORTS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY FAVORABLE; INFILA-
TION HAS BEEN HELD TO MODERATE LEVELS; AID
DONORS, NEW AND OLD, HAVE CONTINUED, AND IN
SOME CASES EXPANDED, THEIR ASSISTANCE; AND
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DAOUD'S OFT-STATED OBJECTIVE OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT HAS NOT BEEN SOURED BY REVERSES, IRAN, AFGHANISTAN'S RICH NEIGHBOR TO THE EAST, HAS BEEN AN OUTLET FOR UNDEREMPLOYED AFGHAN WORKERS. THOUGH THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN STERN MEASURES TO HALT THIS EMIGRATION, PROXIMITY TO IRANIAN PROSPERITY HAS RESULTED IN A STEADY FLOW OF WORKERS INTO HIGHLY PAID IRANIAN JOBS AND AN UNMEASURABLE, BUT SUBSTANTIAL, INFLOW INTO AFGHANISTAN OF THE PROCEEDS FROM THEIR LABORS.

THOUGH FINANCIAL STATISTICS SHOW HEALTHY INDICATORS -- WITH FAVORABLE RESERVES, ADEQUATE CAPITAL INFLOWS FROM EXTERNAL AID SOURCES, AND A NON-OPPRESSIVE DEBT-SERVICE RATIO -- THERE IS AN UNDERLYING ECONOMIC MALAISE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHICH THE DAOUD GOVERNMENT HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN RECTIFYING -- AND AT TIMES HAS SEEMED TO PERPETUATE. ECONOMIC PROGRESS, MEASURED IN UNCERTAIN STATISTICS OF PER CAPITA GNP, HAS NOT BEEN IMPRESSIVE.

THE AFGHAN SEVEN YEAR PLAN INITIATED DURING 1976, WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED THIS MONTH, IS EXPECTED TO BE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO SET THE COURSE OF AFGHAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS. AFGHANISTAN HAS ADEQUATE RESOURCES, DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN, TO FINANCE EXPANDING PROGRAMS OF DEVELOPMENT, AND WHILE PROBLEMS ARE MYRIAD, AND SUCCESS IS NOT ASSUMED, AFGHANISTAN IS FAR FROM BEING A HOPELESS CASE. WHAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IS WHETHER GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES CAN BE FORMULATED TO GRAPPLE SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE REAL CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT: LACK OF SKILLED MANPOWER, IN-

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CLUDING MANAGERS OF ALL SORTS, AND FAILURE TO INVOLVE ALL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, WHICH WILL BE NECESSARY IF ENUNCIATED OBJECTIVES ARE TO BE REACHED.

8. PROBLEMS: THERE ARE CHINKS IN DAOUD'S ARMOR OF CONTROL AND PROGRESS. FROM SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND OUT OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATION DAOUD ATTEMPTS TO RUN AFGHANISTAN SINGLE-HANDEDLY, AND THIS PRESENTS ENORMOUS DISADVANTAGES EVEN FOR CARRYING OUT DAOUD'S OWN INTENTIONS. HE IS THE DECISION MAKER FOR LARGE

AND SMALL ISSUES AS WELL AS THE SOLE ARBITER OF NATIONAL POLICY, AND THERE ARE INEVITABLE BLOCKAGES AND INTERRUPTIONS IN THE FLOW OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS. DAOUD MAINTAINS TOTAL CONTROL EVEN THOUGH HE HAS HONORABLE AND TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED MEN WORKING FOR HIM TO WHOM IT WOULD APPEAR MORE COULD BE DELEGATED. HIS APPOINTMENT OF DR. ABDULLAH OMARAS MINISTER OF HEALTH DURING JANUARY OF 1976 SHOWED PARTICULAR APTITUDE AT FINDING JUST THE RIGHT MAN FOR A KEY POSITION AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT. FOUR OTHER CABINET OFFICIALS (KHURRAM AT PLANNING, JALALLAR AT COMMERCE, MOHAMMEDI AT WATER AND POWER, AND ASEFI AT MINES AND INDUSTRIES) WOULD RATE WELL IN ANY SETTING, YET THEY APPEAR TO BE ON SHORT LEASHES AND TO EXERCISE LITTLE AUTONOMY.

BESIDES TECHNICALLY QJALIFIED MINISTERS DAOUD HAS DEVOTED POLITICAL LIEUTENANTS. THE SOMETIMES FADING BUT NEVER FALLING DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HASSAN SHARQ, SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (AND MINISTER OF FINANCE) ABDULILLAH, MINISTER OF INTERIOR ABDUL QADIR AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE WASEFI ARE ALL POLITICAL HENCHMEN WHO WORK IN CONFIDENTIAL

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COMBINATION TO HELP MAINTAIN THE DAOUD REGIME. THOUGH THE FIRST JOB OF THESE MEN IS TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER MEN AND EVENTS, THEY ALSO ARE LIKELY CHANNELS TO DAOUD FOR CARRYING LEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS. IN HIS JUSTICE MINISTER, DR. ABDUL MAJID, DAOUD HAS A MAN BOTH POLITICALLY SAVVY AND DISTINGUISHED.

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THESE TRUSTED AND/OR COMPETENT MEN, PLUS A HAND-FUL OF OTHERS IN THE BUREAUCRACY AND THE MILITARY, ARE HOWEVER A THIN LINE AGAINST THE PROBLEMS OF AFGHANISTAN. BELOW THEM IS A POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE THAT WOULD CHALLENGE THE BEST EFFORTS OF LEGIONS OF SAGE ADMINISTRATORS. AFGHANISTAN WAS NOT PUSHED INTO BEING ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. IT GOT THERE HONESTLY, ON ITS OWN, AND THE CONDITIONS THAT PUT AFGHANISTAN IN THESE STRAITS HAVE SCARCELY BEEN AMELIORATED.

DAOUD ADMINISTERS AFGHANISTAN BASICALLY AS THOUGH IT WERE IN A PRIVATE FIEF ALLOTTED HIM BY RIGHT OF HISTORY AND PERSONAL CAPACITY. HE IS CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT ANSWERABLE TO ANYONE EXCEPT HIS OWN SENSE OF HISTORY AND DESTINY. THIS STYLE OF LEADERSHIP MAY HOWEVER BE THE ONLY ONE POSSIBLE FOR GETTING AFGHANISTAN ORGANIZED AND MOVING. CERTAINLY ECONOMIC PROGRESS WAS ALMOST NEGIGIBLE DURING THE DAYS OF RELATIVE FREEDOM UNDER THE KING. AFGHANISTAN PUSHED NOSE-TO-GRINDSTONE BY A FORCEFUL, HARSH RULER MAY BE A CHEERLESS PLACE, BUT CHANCES SEEM BETTER THAT ROADS WILL BE BUILT AND FACTORIES RAISED AND MORE LAND PLANTED THAN WOULD BE THE CASE WERE THE OLD WAYS OF THIS ANARCHIC CULTURE ALLOWED TO REIGN, DAOUD'S REGIME MUST NOT, THEREFORE, BE JUDGED HARSHLY.

WHAT MAY DIMINISH THE EFFORTS OF THE DAOUD

REGIME ARE THE ATTENDANT ILLS OF AUTOCRATIC RULE: UNWISE BEHAVIOR OR ERRATIC JUDGMENTS CANNOT BE BALANCED BY THE ADVICE OF WISE AND INDEPENDENT MEN; INITIATIVE AND INDIVIDUAL ABILITY MAY BE STIFLED AS AN ATMOSPHERE OF COURT SYCOPHANCY WORKS ITS WAY THROUGH THE SOCIETY; THE LEADER HIMSELF WILL INCREASINGLY BE DECEIVED AND DENIED ACCESS TO REALITY BY MEN WHOSE AIM IT IS TO CONVINCE THEIR LEADER THAT ALL HIS ORDERS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT AND THAT ALL HIS IDEAS WORK WELL.

9. FORECAST: FOR 1977 WE FORESEE MORE OF THE SAME: RIGIT CONTROL BY DAOUD, A REGIME COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROGRESS BUT SERIOUSLY LIMITED IN COMPETENCE AND SEVERELY TAXED BY CONDITIONS, AN "OPPOSITION" SCATTERED, AFRAID AND BANKRUPT OF NEW METHODS OR IDEAS, AND AN ECONOMY ON THE VERGE OF PROVIDING INFUSIONS OF NEW GOODS, SERVICES AND MONEY BUT
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HAMPERED BY GOVERNMENT MORTMAIN AND A GENERALIZED PAUCITY OF MANAGERS OF ALL SORTS. THOUGH EARLY IN 1976 DAOUD'S HEALTH WAS QUESTIONABLE AND MANY RUMORS CIRCULATED CONCERNING IT, HE IS PHYSICALLY UP TO HIS JOB AND ONLY SOME UNFORESEEN DISEASE OR DELIBERATE ASSAULT UPON HIM SEEKS LIKELY TO SHAKE THIS. IN ADDITION TO POSSIBLE NEW LEGISLATION, DAOUD'S CONSTITUTION WRITTEN DURING 1976 AND OTHER DECREES OF THAT YEAR WILL BE OFFICIALLY ACCORDED PLACE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY. THIS WILL BRING NEW COHERENCE TO METHODS OF THE REGIME AND MORE PRECISE JUSTICE FOR AN AFGHAN POPULACE NOW UNCERTAIN WHAT ARE THE GROUND RULES AND WHAT ARE THE INSTITUTIONS WITHIN WHICH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE REPUBLIC WILL BE ORDERED. MORE PROBLEMATIC IS WHETHER THE YEAR WILL BRING POLITICAL REFORM THAT WILL SURVIVE DAOUD'S DEPARTURE AND OFFER THE COUNTRY ANALOGOUS INSTITUTIONS FOR COMBINING STABILITY WITH CHANGE.

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